

NUTRITION

Fat Facts

Fats occur naturally in food and play an important role in nutrition. Fats and oils provide a concentrated source of energy for the body. Fats are used to store energy in the body, insulate body tissues and transport fat soluble vitamins through the blood.

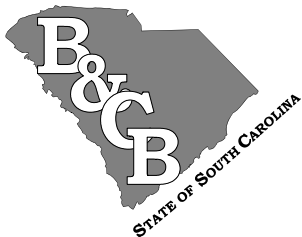
Not All Fats and Oils Are Created Equally

Fats and oils are made up of basic units called fatty acids. Each type of fat or oil is a mixture of different fatty acids.

1. **Saturated Fatty Acids** are found chiefly in animal sources such as meat and poultry, whole or reduced-fat milk, and butter. Some vegetable oils like coconut, palm kernel oil, and palm oil are saturated. Saturated fats are usually solid at room temperature.
2. **Monounsaturated Fatty Acids** are found mainly in vegetable oils such as canola, olive and peanut oils. They are liquid at room temperature.
3. **Polyunsaturated Fatty Acids** are found mainly in vegetable oils such as safflower, sunflower, corn, flaxseed, and canola oils. Polyunsaturated fats are also the main fats found in seafood. They are liquid or soft at room temperature. Specific polyunsaturated fatty acids, such as linoleic acid and alpha-linolenic acid, are called essential fatty acids. They are necessary for cell structure and making hormones. Essential fatty acids must be obtained from foods we choose.
4. **Trans Fatty Acids** are formed when vegetable oils are processed into margarine or shortening. Sources of trans fats in the diet include snack foods and baked goods made with “partially hydrogenated vegetable oil” or “vegetable shortening.” Trans fatty acids and Cholesterol: Know Your Limits

The guidelines for fat intake are well known: healthy Americans should consume no more than 30 percent of total calories from fat. The “30 percent” guideline means:

- ◆ 7-10 percent of total calories from saturated fats,
- ◆ About 10 - 15 percent of total calories from monounsaturated fats, and
- ◆ About 10 percent from polyunsaturated fats.



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South Carolina Budget and Control Board
Employee Insurance Program
March 2002